

and sophisticated connections, between academia and the world outside it, and across different media, space, and time.

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### *General*

Delphi, one of the most spectacular sites in Europe and an immensely important oracular site of Ancient Greece is the theme of an edited volume originating in a conference organized in 2017.<sup>1</sup> Unlike most conference proceedings, this volume is truly thorough in terms of breadth of coverage, and it is also beautifully produced and equipped with very useful indices which greatly facilitate orientation. There are twenty-three chapters in German and English, divided into six sections: archaeology, the functioning of the oracle, the role of Delphi in Greek history, the representation of the oracle in archaic and classical literature, its role in the theological and philosophical debates of the Roman period, and a brief section on its modern reception. Anyone interested in Delphi will find something useful in this volume.

Delphi is also one of the central topics of another edited volume, which studies the cult and representation of Artemis in the four great sanctuaries of Apollo: Delos, Delphi, Claros, and Didyma.<sup>2</sup> Even though Artemis had a cult in each place, the nature and the audience of her cult differed from site to site. The editors are especially interested in the differences between local and Panhellenic worship. Even though the nature of the evidence for each cult place is different, they maintain consistency across the volume by focusing on five main types of evidence: literary sources, topography, architecture of sanctuaries, inscriptions, and iconography of the goddess. At Delos, sanctuary inventories play a particularly significant role as sources for her cult, while at Delphi it is votive reliefs, in Claros terracotta figurines, and in Didyma the bases of the dedicated statues. The resulting volume is a veritable treasure trove of useful information and will be a valuable resource for anyone interested in the cult of Artemis or these cult places.

One of the enduring and endlessly fascinating questions related to Apollo's sanctuary at Delphi is the precise nature of Pythia's experience. What caused her trance? Was it the chewing of the laurel, the psychoactive gases from the fissures under the temple, autosuggestion, or specific cognitive training, or was it all an elaborate ruse? The answer depends on who you ask. But if you are interested in these types of questions (and let's face it, who isn't?), the *Routledge Companion to Ecstatic Experience in the*

<sup>1</sup> *Delphi. Apollons Orakel in der Welt der Antike*. Edited by Balbina Bäbler and Heinz-Günther Nesselrath. *Civitatium Orbis MEditerranei Studia* 6. Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 2021. Pp. vii + 611. Hardback €154, ISBN: 978-3-16-157570-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Artémis près d'Apollon. Délos, Delphes, Claros et Didymes*. Edited by Hélène Aurigny and Cécile Durvy. *Kernos Supplément* 37. Liège, Presses universitaires de Liège, 2021, Pp. 416. Paperback €30, ISBN: 978-2-87562-272-3.

*Ancient World* will both inform and delight you.<sup>3</sup> The contributions cover a vast chronological spread (from the Neolithic revolution to the end of antiquity) and geographical scope (the ancient Mediterranean and the Near East). Thematically the volume opens with three chapters setting the stage, where the terminology of ecstatic experience and a history of research is discussed. Part 2 is about psychoactive substances, with seven chapters on plants, alcohol, and potions (Caucasian cocktail anyone?). Part 3 is on the ecstatic experience and the numinous, mostly focusing on individual rituals or cult sites. The fourth part is about the manifestations and expressions of the ecstatic mind, with seven chapters on possession, ghosts, ecstatic speech, vision, and interspecies communication. This volume will be a valuable resource both for individual cultures under discussion and for cross-cultural comparison.

A richly illustrated history of coins and numismatics does not at first sight represent a reasonable transition from literature about ecstatic experience, but bear with me, or rather with the author, Frank L. Holt.<sup>4</sup> In his own words,

money [is] delightfully enigmatic and magical beyond the scope of most other items associated with everyday life. If magic is the belief that ordinary things wield extraordinary powers to influence events in mysterious ways, then what need have we for wands and wizards? (8–9)

The author's enthusiasm for both coins and history of numismatics renders this slim volume positively unputdownable. Did you ever wonder what is it like to be a coin? Who invented money? What aspects of production render ancient Greek coins more aesthetically pleasing than modern coinage? What does physiognomy have to do with numismatics? Why do hoards matter? Why would a marine biologist collect ancient Greek coins? Even if you haven't considered these questions, this delightfully entertaining and at times poignant book will conjure a whole world of riches far surpassing the merely monetary.

If, however, you are interested in the way that even lofty concepts such as ruler cult can be reduced to monetary value, I can recommend the edited volume on the *Materiality of Hellenistic Ruler Cults* and the article 'Who Pays the Bill? Monetary Aspects of Royal Cult in the Ptolemaic Kingdom' by Catharine Lorber (the answer: both state and individuals – practically everyone).<sup>5</sup> The volume editor, Stefano Caneva, a doyen of the study of Hellenistic ruler cult, contributed no fewer than four and a half of ten chapters (Introduction, Afterword, a chapter on the ritual and social functions of inscribed altars, plaques, and blocks in the diffusion of Hellenistic ruler cult, another on the Pergamon decree establishing cultic honours for King Attalos III, and a chapter co-authored with Luca Lorenzon on hymns as ritualized

<sup>3</sup> *The Routledge Companion to Ecstatic Experience in the Ancient World*. Edited by Diana Stein, Sarah Kiehl Costello, and Karen Polinger Foster. Abingdon and New York, Routledge, 2022. Pp. xxiii + 535. 61 b/w and 33 colour illustrations. Hardback £190, ISBN: 978-0-367-48032-5.

<sup>4</sup> *When Money Talks. A History of Coins and Numismatics*. By Frank L. Holt. Oxford, Oxford University Press 2021. Pp. xii + 254. Hardback £25.99, ISBN: 978-0-19-751765-9.

<sup>5</sup> *The Materiality of Hellenistic Ruler Cults*. Edited by Stefano G. Caneva with the collaboration of L. Lorenzon. Kernos Supplément 36, Liège, Presses universitaires de Liège, 2020. Pp. 299. Paperback €30, ISBN: 978-2-87562-242-6.

communication between the community and the divinized king). Other contributions are on the cult statues of the Ptolemies and the Attalids, offerings and libations for the king in Egyptian temples and the precise meaning of the hyper ('for') formula in the Egyptian context, the Hekatomnid dynasty of Karia, and ruler cult in the setting of Egyptian gymnasia and associations. The volume is beautifully produced and accompanied by excellent indices. As a side note, all *Kernos* supplements are printed by the Liège university press, which uses decent-sized font and beautiful, thick paper, and yet they are also eminently affordable.

'There is no better way to acknowledge the relentless flow of time, and to affirm its goodness, than by celebrating the act of eating.' (7) This is the hook of David Roochnik's whimsical meditation on food, the *Odyssey*, Euripides' *Bacchae*, Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*, Plato's *Symposium* and *Phaedo*, and various works of Aristotle.<sup>6</sup> Roochnik intersperses his discussions of these (and other) texts with personal remarks about culinary triumphs, disasters, and average meals in between, visits to the gym, and drinking fine and cheap wines while thinking about life's great and small challenges, including (but not restricted to) parental guilt, awful neighbours, death, and soylent. In case this sounds too boring, there are also blowout parties, LSD, and mescaline. The resulting mash-up of Nigel Slater and US-style undergraduate lectures will not please everyone, but Roochnik's disarming honesty and clear passion for teaching somehow make this book work.

Ruminations of a different kind and with a clearly defined focus (ancient concepts of sustainability) are at the core of a new contribution to the growing field of environmental humanities (or 'environmental philology', as the author, Mark D. Usher, refers to his project).<sup>7</sup> Starting with the discussion of Greek nature goddesses and the concept of sacrifice, Usher argues that Schweitzer's concept of 'reverence for life' best explains and captures early Greek thinking about the relationship of humans with nature. The Presocratics Anaximander (Chapter 2) and Heraclitus (Chapter 3) are evaluated from the perspective of complex system studies; Plato's *Republic* is a simulation (Chapter 4); Cleisthenes' reforms are compared to leverage points in a complex system, a set of measures preserving a system's self-sustainability (Chapter 5). 'Cynicism and sustainability' practically writes itself, whereas Stoicism takes some effort, but ultimately Usher is able to demonstrate the affinities between sustainable well-being and collective *eudaimonia* (Chapter 6). Finally, he tackles the Roman ideal of self-sufficient farming and the lifestyle of Benedictine monks (Chapters 7–8). Usher closes with an afterword describing his own life on a farm in Vermont. This is a thought-provoking and well-written book, even if the levels of preciousness occasionally rise to precipitous heights.

Finally, two books from the new Princeton University Press series Ancient Wisdom for Modern Readers.<sup>8</sup> These are beautifully produced small volumes and make perfect

<sup>6</sup> *Eat, Drink, Think. What Ancient Greece Can Tell Us about Food and Wine*. By David Roochnik. London and New York, Bloomsbury Academic, 2020, pp. xi + 172. Hardback £80, ISBN: 978-1-3501-2076-1; paperback £25.99, ISBN: 978-1-3501-2077-8.

<sup>7</sup> *Plato's Pigs and Other Ruminations. Ancient Guides to Living with Nature*. By M. D. Usher. Ancient Wisdom for Modern Readers. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. xv + 265. 23 illustrations. Hardback £29.99, ISBN: 978-1-108-83958-7.

<sup>8</sup> <<https://press.princeton.edu/series/ancient-wisdom-for-modern-readers>>, accessed 2 June 2022.

presents, with suitable topics for just about anyone. They are bilingual, with a facing English translation, and resemble Loeb's in dimensions, although the production value of the Princeton volumes is higher (nice, thick pages). I suspect that *How to Stop a Conspiracy. An Ancient Guide to Saving a Republic* will be particularly popular in the US this Christmas season. The books we received, *How to Innovate*<sup>9</sup> and *How to be a Farmer*,<sup>10</sup> feature selections of texts, the former from Aristotle, Athenaeus' description of the construction of the ship *Syracusia*, and Diodorus' account of Epaminondas' strategy at Leuctra and the invention of the catapult; the latter selections from the usual suspects: Hesiod, Plato's city for pigs, Lucretius, Varro, Virgil, Horace, Pliny the Elder, Columella, Cato, and Longus, but also Musonius Rufus and the Orphic Hymns. I have no interest in farming, but this book made me pause. Apparently, the Roman custom dictated that, before thinning out a grove, one must make an expiatory sacrifice of a pig and pray to the god or goddess to whom the grove belonged. An entrepreneurial friend of mine was thinning out his recently acquired plot of woods and got Lyme disease from a tick bite in the process (he's fine now). I wonder if that could have been avoided by performing the customary Roman sacrifice and prayer. . . . At any rate, I know who's getting a copy of *How to Be a Farmer* this Christmas.

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<sup>9</sup> Aristotle. *How to Innovate. An Ancient Guide to Creative Thinking*. Edited and translated by Armand D'Angour. Ancient Wisdom for Modern Readers. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2021. Pp. xxii + 138. Hardback £12.99, ISBN: 978-0-691-21373-6.

<sup>10</sup> *How to Be a Farmer. An Ancient Guide to Life on the Land. A Work of Many Hands*. Selected, translated, and introduced by M. D. Usher. Ancient Wisdom for Modern Readers. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2021. Pp. xvi + 247. Hardback £12.99, ISBN: 978-0-691-21174-9.